

REMARKS

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 6, 13, 18 and 23 is acknowledged and appreciated. Solely in order to expedite issuance of the present application, claims 1, 8, 15 and 20 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject of claims 6, 13, 18 and 23, respectively, without prejudice/disclaimer to the subject matter embodied by claims 1, 8, 15 and 20.

Under Federal Circuit guidelines, a dependent claim is nonobvious if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are contained in the dependent claims, *Hartness International Inc. v. Simplicatic Engineering Co.*, 819 F.2d at 1100, 1108 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Accordingly, as the independent claims are patentable for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims dependent thereon are also patentable. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are patentable based on their own merits by adding novel and non-obvious features to the combination.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

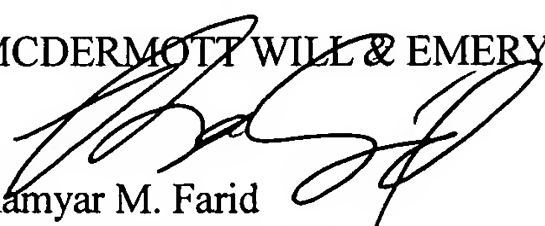
To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including

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extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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